

# ADMISSIONS POLICY

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The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.

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**UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON**

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## 1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This policy applies to all courses leading to an award from the Royal Academy of Music. Further detail is available in the Academy's Regulations.
- 1.2 With reference to legislation as well as information and guidance from the Office for Students and UUK, this policy contains information on admissions requirements and processes, including where responsibility for decision-making lies within the Academy.
- 1.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Academy's Regulations and with other supporting policies which are available on the Academy's website, including but not limited to:
  - Royal Academy of Music Access and Participation Plan
  - Equality and Diversity Policy
  - Safeguarding policies

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 The Admissions Board has overall responsibility for making decisions about admissions to the Academy. Occasionally the Admissions Board will delegate responsibility to the Principal or another member of the Senior Management Team to make offers to individual candidates, but these decisions will always be formally ratified by the Admissions Board in line with the appropriate entrance requirements (see section 9) and good governance practice.
- 2.2 The operation of admissions is overseen by the Registrar and Director of Student Operations and carried out by the Admissions Team. This includes but is not limited to: providing up to date information on the Academy's educational information, dealing with programme-related enquiries, arranging the London and International auditions, processing applications, communication of offers, supporting applicants and offer holders, providing financial advice, visa advice and assisting with any queries, complaints and appeals that may arise.
- 2.3 In arriving at an admissions decision, the Admissions Board will give consideration to all aspects of an applicant's profile, including:
  - Performance at audition
  - The quality of the portfolio (composition candidates)
  - Research degrees: the research proposal and accompanying recordings (performance candidates), coupled with performance at interview (shortlisted candidates).
  - Programme assessment report
  - Potential to benefit from the programme
  - Academic qualifications
  - Music qualifications
  - Previous performance experience

### 3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.1 The Academy is committed to operating a fair, transparent and professional admissions process which runs in accordance with the requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010. No applicant will be discriminated against on the basis of a protected characteristic.

### 4. FAIR ADMISSIONS

- 4.1 Due to the practical and performance-nature of the Academy's programmes, all applicants are considered via a practice-based assessment, or are required to submit work for assessment, in the case of composition. This approach to highly-tailored admissions decisions, based on a thorough assessment of each applicant – in person in the vast majority of cases – ensures that the primary consideration for entry to the Academy is evidence of professional performing potential and every applicant is assessed equally and in-depth.
- 4.2 In supporting fair admissions to the Academy and in compliance with the principles of consumer protection law, and guidance published by the Competitions and Markets Authority, the Academy will:
- Accurately describe programmes on its website, in the prospectus and through other marketing and promotional material (including clarification regarding programme structure and costs)
  - Provide up-to-date information for all programmes on the Academy's website
  - Encourage applications from those with the motivation and ability to succeed in our programmes
  - Assess each application individually against the agreed entrance requirements (see section 9)
  - Provide transparency in the admissions process
  - Provide a means of auditioning for Academy programmes which reflects the international profile of our applicant base, including international audition locations and, where appropriate, opportunities to audition via the online application management system (Accept'd) for international applicants who cannot access a live audition
  - Ensure that all auditions are normally assessed by a minimum of two people who are appropriately trained in admissions procedures for taught programmes; and for research degrees a minimum of six people on the shortlist review panel and a minimum of three people for the interview.
  - Provide application fee waivers and subsidise travel costs to ensure that applicants from a low-income background (meeting relevant criteria as published on the Academy's website) are not prevented from auditioning on grounds of affordability; and,
  - Provide a range of financial support measures, including bursary provision for Home undergraduate students from low-income households and bursary support to eligible international and postgraduate students, to reduce the impact of affordability on enrolment.

## 5. APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

- 5.1 The Academy encourages and welcomes applications from those with disabilities. Applicants are invited to disclose any disabilities at the point of application. This information will be held within the Registry for the purposes of planning support and data monitoring.
- 5.2 Other than entrance requirements that are essential skills, experience, knowledge or understanding (competence standards) for a programme, the Academy will make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.3 Applicants who have a disability or specific additional needs which may affect their ability to audition or apply are invited to contact the Admissions Team to discuss their specific requirements, which may include special arrangements for the audition/interview. In any event, the Admissions Team will, as a matter of course, write to all applicants who declare a disability or additional needs on the application form, and may refer the applicant to the Academy's Disability Advisor for additional support and guidance where appropriate.

## 6. STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 18

- 6.1 The normal minimum age for study is 18 by 1 September in the year of joining the Academy. The Academy does not normally admit students under the age of 18 years but does do so in exceptional cases.
- 6.2 The law considers that everyone under the age of 18 is a child, and the Academy therefore requires the permission of the student's parents or legal guardian for them to enrol and attend a study programme here.
- 6.3 The Academy has Safeguarding policies and procedures in place for students aged over and under 18.
- 6.4 The Academy may refer safeguarding concerns to external agencies such as local authorities and/or the police.
- 6.5 In the event that a student who is under the age of 18 is sponsored by the Academy using the Academy's Student Visa Sponsor Licence (see part 15, below), the Academy will have regard to Part 13 of Document 2 of the Home Office's Student Sponsor Guidance, which deals with safeguarding children who are applying for Student Visas: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-sponsor-guidance>.

## 7. APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

- 7.1 The Academy believes that an unspent criminal conviction should not automatically prevent someone from studying. Disclosure is not a requirement of the application process, but we do encourage applicants to disclose information pre-enrolment so that they can be fully supported throughout their studies. Please note that applicants requiring a Student Visa are required to disclose this to the Academy as part of the visa application process, as it may impact on their eligibility for a visa.
- 7.2 Applicants whose conviction may mean that they require additional support in order to apply or to study should contact a member of the Admissions Team so that appropriate arrangements can be discussed and put in place.

- 7.3 If a DBS check is required for a course or part of a course (applicants for and students on programmes requiring regulated activity with children and adults) and identifies a criminal conviction, the Academy will consider, based on the evidence, whether the nature of the conviction may prevent an applicant from undertaking their course, and whether an applicant poses an unacceptable risk to the Academy community. In most cases a conviction is unlikely to be a barrier to study. However, if the risk is assessed as too high then a place may not be offered or an offer may be withdrawn.
- 7.4 Information on criminal convictions will be treated in strict confidence as sensitive personal data, and only seen by staff directly involved in the decision on admission (normally the Deputy Principal or Dean of Students, Registrar and Director of Student Operations, and Assistant Registrar (Admissions and Student Financial Awards)).

## 8. MATURE STUDENTS

- 8.1 Applications from mature students, i.e. over the age of 21 at entry to undergraduate programmes or over the age of 25 to postgraduate programmes, are welcomed. Successful mature applicants, as all other applicants, must satisfy the auditioning/interviewing panels that they have the ability and potential to cope with the demands of the course which they wish to pursue.
- 8.2 Whilst appropriate entrance requirements will still be applied, consideration will be given to relevant experience in accordance with the Academy's Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning policy.

## 9. ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

- 9.1 The Academy welcomes applications from students holding a broad range of qualifications and will use independently published guidelines recognised within the United Kingdom such as the UK National Information Centre (UK ENIC) when considering the equivalence of qualifications.
- 9.2 The Academy's entrance requirements are reviewed on a regular basis and up-to-date entrance requirements for all programmes are publicly available on the Academy's website.
- 9.3 As a minimum, applicants for full-time undergraduate programmes will be expected to have been educated to General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A Level) or UK qualification level 3 equivalent. Postgraduate applicants will normally have achieved, or be working towards achieving, an honours degree, although equivalent professional experience will also be taken into account.

## 10. ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

- 10.1 English is the language of instruction at the Academy, and an acceptable command of the English language is essential for all programmes. Applicants whose first language is not English may be required to demonstrate their language proficiency in accordance with the requirements set out for Academy programmes (<https://www.ram.ac.uk/study/next-step/entry-requirements>).
- 10.2 The tests that the Academy will accept are published on our website. English Language certificates must be verifiable through an online service (as for IELTS, Pearson and

TOEFL) or else must be provided as an original certificate. English language certificates will not be accepted if they are more than two years old.

- 10.3 The Academy's English Language entry requirements are published on our website.

## 11. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- 11.1 All applicants are required to apply via UCAS Conservatoires.  
 11.2 Applicants are encouraged to observe the 'on time' deadlines in order to ensure equal consideration of their application. Late applications will be considered on an individual basis if there are still places available on the relevant programme and within the relevant principal study department.

## 12. THE AUDITION

- 12.1 Auditions at the Academy normally involve (i) a performance/portfolio assessment and; subject to achieving the required standard at stage (i), (ii) a programme assessment (interview).  
 12.2 Detailed guidance on additional department-specific requirements will be provided on the Academy's website and kept up to date via annual review.  
 12.3 Research degree applicants are normally assessed on the submitted portfolio of materials and research proposal, followed by an interview for shortlisted candidates. An audition may be required for performance candidates.

## 13. COMMUNICATION OF DECISIONS

- 13.1 Applicants will receive formal notification of the decision on their audition/application via their UCAS Conservatoires Hub. If they are to be made an offer of a place by the Academy, the Hub details will specify any conditions of entry that they are expected to meet and the date by which these conditions must be met in order to take up that place. The conditions of entry may include, but are not limited to, academic; non-academic; and English language proficiency. The offer will also detail the tuition fee, confirm fee status and will include confirmation of any entrance scholarship offer made.  
 13.2 An applicant will be required to respond to an offer through UCAS Conservatoires.  
 13.3 For offers made before the end of December in any given year, the deadline for accepting or declining an offer will usually be the end of January in the following year if the applicant has received decisions from all their UCAS Conservatoire choices. Applicants should note the 'Decline by Default' dates which will automatically decline their offer if no response has been received in the system by that date. The Decline by Default dates are published by on the UCAS Conservatoires website and notified to applicants via their Hub.  
 13.4 The Academy will communicate only with the applicant, unless they have given consent for the Academy to discuss their application/audition with another person (e.g. a parent or guardian).



## 14. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

- 14.1 Entry to the Academy is extremely competitive with limited places in particular departments and which will vary in number year on year. The Academy gives no undertaking to admit every suitably qualified applicant to a programme of study.
- 14.2 Unsuccessful applicants, or those who do not take up their place, may reapply to the Academy in a subsequent year. It is not normally possible to audition for the same principal study more than once in the same audition session.

## 15. VISA REQUIREMENTS

- 15.1 As the holder of a Home Office Student Visa Sponsor Licence, the Academy is required to take steps to ensure that all students enrolled at the Academy hold an immigration or nationality status which permits them to study in the UK. To comply with this duty the Academy needs to see [original] current passports and visas for all students as part of the enrolment process in order to verify and retain evidence that they hold a status that is valid for study at the Royal Academy of Music. We cannot permit a student who is subject to immigration control to enrol/register at the Academy without undertaking this process.
- 15.2 In addition to the above, for those students whose Student Visas are sponsored by the Academy, the Academy is required to obtain and retain certain documents (including certified translations if these are not in English) as set out in Document 2 of the Home Office's Student Sponsor Guidance. Where copies have been obtained in order to sponsor students' Student Visa applications, originals will be obtained, verified and retained following the students' arrival in the UK. In addition to the documentation required as part of our Home Office Student Visa Sponsor Licence commitments we will also store any other documentation sent to us in support of an application.
- 15.3 In considering whether to make an offer to an applicant who requires Student Visa sponsorship, the Academy will have regard to the Home Office's Student Sponsor Guidance and will ensure all requirements of that Guidance have been satisfied before issuing an applicant the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies ("CAS") which they need to support their Student Visa application. In addition, the Academy reserves the right not to issue a CAS to an applicant where it is believed that there is a risk of their Student Visa application being refused, or that they may not enrol at the Academy even if their visa is approved, or that they may enrol at the Academy but not complete their course.
- 15.4 Applicants whose first language is not English may be required to undertake an English language assessment in order to satisfy Home Office visa regulations for entry into the UK onto a course.
- 15.5 For further information, please see the Academy's guidance for applicants requiring a Student Visa on our website at: <https://www.ram.ac.uk/student-life/international/visas-and-immigration>.

## 16. DEFERRED ENTRY

- 16.1 The Academy does not normally permit applicants who have been made an offer to defer their place to the following year or subsequent years. It is expected that the candidate would re-audition for the intended year of entry.

## 17. RESPONSIBILITY OF APPLICANTS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- 17.1 It is the responsibility of applicants to provide full and accurate information in an application and to notify the Academy of any changes or corrections to the original application.
- 17.2 Upon accepting an offer of admission and accepting a place via UCAS Conservatoires, the applicant agrees to abide by the Regulations of the Academy.
- 17.3 In the light of any additional information which was not available at the time of selection, an offer may be amended or, in exceptional circumstances, withdrawn. The Academy also reserves the right to correct errors where they have been made in the communication of decisions and offers. However, an offer made in error where all conditions have already been satisfied by the applicant will only be withdrawn with the applicant's consent.
- 17.4 The Academy reserves the right to exclude a candidate who, as part of the application process, is considered on justifiable grounds to be unsuitable for a place on a particular course according to individual circumstances.

## 18. CHANGES OF APPLICANT CIRCUMSTANCE

- 18.1 The Academy's decisions on applications are made in good faith on the basis that all of the information provided by applicants is complete and accurate. Should there be any change in circumstances after an application is submitted, it is the applicant's responsibility to inform the Academy as soon as possible.
- 18.2 Applicants are also required to inform the Academy in writing should their personal details (such as email address, name, contact address, telephone number) change and to update their UCAS Conservatoires record accordingly. Failure to update the Academy on any changes may result in candidates missing important correspondence. The Academy accepts no responsibility for any correspondence which fails to arrive due to incomplete or incorrect contact details which have been provided by an applicant.

## 19. MISREPRESENTATION BY AN APPLICANT/ FRAUD

- 19.1 The Academy reserves the right to reject an application, withdraw an offer of a place and/or revoke a student's registration should it be discovered that a false statement has been made or significant information has been omitted from the application.
- 19.2 The Academy is vigilant against fraud, and has the right to give outside organisations, including the Police, the Home Office and local authorities, information from the applicant's Accepted profile or other documentation if legally required to do so.
- 19.3 Applications which have been flagged via the UCAS Conservatoires similarity detection service will be annotated in the student application file which will be available to the Admissions Team when making their decision. Any applicants whose application is

identified as having similarities with other sources such as other applicants' Personal Statements will be contacted to discuss the reasons for the similarities and may be asked to resubmit before an offer can be made.

## 20. ANTI-FRAUD AND GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE

20.1 In accordance with the requirements of Section 199 of the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023, all admissions decisions, including the offer of places and of financial awards must be undertaken strictly within the Academy's approved governance, authorisation, and procedural frameworks. Adherence to these arrangements is essential to maintaining organisational integrity, ensuring transparency and accountability, and mitigating the risk of fraud or improper conduct. Staff are therefore required to follow all mandated checks, approvals, and record-keeping processes when formulating or contributing to such decisions.

## 21. ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (APEL)

- 21.1 The Academy recognises that significant knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to its core programmes of study can be developed as a result of learning opportunities outside formal educational frameworks such as through employment, voluntary work, or individual activities and interests.
- 21.2 This recognition promotes lifelong learning, social inclusion and wider participation; above all, it ensures that the Academy provides equal access opportunities to gifted and motivated applicants from all backgrounds.
- 21.3 The Academy has developed strong and clear mechanisms for identifying, assessing and formally acknowledging prior learning, including prior certificated learning and prior experiential learning. Prior certificated learning refers to learning and achievement that was assessed and certificated before the start of the programme of study. Prior experiential learning refers to learning and achievement through experience and critical reflection outside the context of a formal programme of study. It is crucial that proper consideration be given in the admissions process to the extent of learning and achievement through experience, not just the relevance of the experience alone.
- 21.4 The Academy's APEL policy provides the framework by which requests for APEL are considered.

## 22. ASSESSMENT FEES

- 22.1 All applicants must pay the appropriate non-refundable assessment fee before an audition or interview can be granted. Assessment fees may be waived following proof of receipt of one of the applicable Government benefits prior to application. The Academy can also support audition/interview travel costs for UK domiciled students under 27 years old and who are receiving the assessment fee waiver. This is for one person's standard-class public transport return travel from their home to the Academy. Applications for assessment fee waivers or travel costs cannot be made after the audition/interview has taken place. Please see the Academy website for further information.
- 22.2 Refunds of assessment fees are not normally given except in cases where the Academy has been unable to organise an audition/interview or reschedule an

audition/interview as a result of illness. Any requests for a refund on grounds of illness must be supported by a medical note.

- 22.3 Applications are processed as soon as the appropriate assessment fee is paid. The assessment fee is therefore non-refundable if you decide to withdraw at a later date.
- 22.4 The assessment fee covers a range of costs associated with the process either live or online, including the preparation of audition and portfolio submissions for assessment by admissions panels, the staffing of panels, and the processing of audition/interview outcomes to every applicant.

## 23. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

- 23.1 Applicants can request a copy of their admissions assessment data as recorded in Accepted, via an email to [registry@ram.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ram.ac.uk).
- 23.2 We assess everyone who submits a complete on-time application. However, our assessment process is diagnostic, to enable the Academy to make decisions about the offer of places, rather than consultative. We are therefore unable to provide detailed feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

## 24. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

- 24.1 Decisions by the Admissions Board on the admission of applicants to the Academy are final. There is no appeal against such decisions on the basis of disagreement with the academic and/or professional judgement of the relevant panel in reaching their decision.
- 24.2 The Academy will only consider a complaint relating to an application for admission if there is clear evidence of a procedural irregularity in the way the application has been processed, or if the complaint arises from the applicant's previous time as a student and the admissions decision is directly connected to that prior enrolment.
- 24.3 Complaints falling within the scope of paragraph 24.2 above should be addressed in the first instance to the Registrar and Director of Student Operations and should be submitted within seven working days of receipt of the outcome of an application. Complaints received after that period may not be considered.
- 24.4 The Registrar and Director of Student Operations, or their nominee, will arrange for the complaint to be investigated and will respond formally in writing within fourteen working days of receipt. The scope and terms of the investigation are at the Registrar and Director of Student Operations' discretion.
- 24.5 The decision of the Registrar and Director of Student Operations shall be final. In line with the remit of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE), complaints about admissions decisions cannot generally be referred to the OIA, except in cases where the applicant is a former student and the complaint is directly connected to their prior time at the Academy.

## 25. DATA PROTECTION

- 25.1 For information on how the Academy processes candidates' personal data, please see our Privacy Statement, which is available at <https://www.ram.ac.uk/privacy-policy>